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SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY
BULLETIN 48

THE CHOCTAW OF BAYOU LACOMB ST. TAMMANY PARISH LOUISIANA

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
NATIONAL MUSEUM

BY

DAVID I. BUSHNELL, JR.

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION,
BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY,
Washington, D. C., July 15, 1909.

SIR: I beg to transmit herewith a manuscript prepared by Mr. David I. Bushnell, Jr., on "The Choctaw of Bayou Lacomb, St. Tammany parish, Louisiana," with a view to its publication, with your approval, as a Bulletin of this Bureau.

Very respectfully, yours,

W. H. HOLMES,
Chief.

The SECRETARY OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION,
Washington, D. C.

PREFATORY NOTE

From December, 1908, until April, 1909, the writer was in lower Louisiana, the greater part of the time being spent in St. Tammany parish, on the northern shore of Lake Pontchartrain, not far from New Orleans. During this period frequent visits were made to the few Choctaw still living near Bayou Lacomb, in the same parish. The notes obtained as a result of those visits are now presented on the following pages.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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THE CHOCTAW OF BAYOU LACOMB, ST. TAMMANY PARISH, LOUISIANA

By David I. Bushnell, Jr.

HABITAT

St. Tammany parish, Louisiana, borders on the northern shore of Lake Pontchartrain and is bounded on the east by the State of Mississippi, from which it is separated by Pearl river.

In the southern part of the parish are many bayous that flow into Lake Pontchartrain. Extensive marshes and swamps are found between the bayous, in which flourish the magnolia, live oak, black gum, cypress, and palmetto, and vast quantities of Spanish moss hang from the branches of many trees. Back from the swamps and bayous, on slightly higher ground, is one unbroken stretch of forests of longleaf pine (pl. 1).

Deer, otter, and mink are still to be found; opossums, raccoons, squirrels, and rabbits are very numerous; and ducks, quail, and wild turkeys are killed in large numbers.

The climate is mild during the winter; there is but little frost, and rarely a few flakes of snow fall. The summers are long and hot. As a whole the section is very healthful.

At the present time the Choctaw have two settlements within the limits of the parish: one near Bayou Lacomb, the other at Pearl River station, on the right bank of the river, about twelve miles from its mouth. Only a few members, a mere remnant, of the tribe now live in this region.

HISTORY

Unfortunately very little is known of the history of the people of whom this paper treats.

The earliest writers, as well as the oldest maps of the region, designate the Acolapissa as the tribe occupying the region now included within the limits of St. Tammany parish, at the time of the discovery and settlement of lower Louisiana by the French.

The Acolapissa were so closely connected with the Choctaw proper that it is not possible now to distinguish between them. They spoke

the same language, probably with only slight local variations. Their manners and customs, in all probability, were similar to a great extent.

One of the earliest definite references to the region is contained in the *Relation* of Pénicaut,[a] touching on a period when there was a general movement among the Southern tribes. It is stated thus:

> At this same time [1705] the Colapissas, who dwelt on a little river called *Talcatcha*, four leagues distant from the shore of Lake Pontchartrain, went to live on its banks at the place named Castembayouque.

The river "Talcatcha" is the present Pearl river, and, as will be seen, the distance of the "Colapissas" village up the river from Lake Pontchartrain is the same as that of the present Choctaw settlement. The Choctaw name of their own settlement is Hatcha, a name applied also to Pearl river. This name is clearly a contraction of the word *Talcatcha* recorded by Pénicaut.

Moving from Pearl river about the year 1705, the "Colapissas" went to "Castembayouque." Here, again, is a name similar to the present Choctaw designation of a bayou a few miles west of Bayou Lacomb. On the maps this is now designated Castine bayou; but to the Choctaw it is still known as Caste bayou, *caste* being the Choctaw word for "flea;" the bayou, they say, is thus named on account of the large number of fleas found near its mouth and on its banks.

On the Ross map of 1765, a small portion of which is reproduced in plate 2, the site of an old town of the "Colapissas" is indicated near the mouth of Pearl river, evidently too far south.

West of Pearl river, on the same map, is "Kefonctei R," the present Chefuncte river (from the Choctaw word for "chinkapin"). The short stream entering Lake Pontchartrain between the two rivers is evidently intended to represent Bayou Lacomb, as the olcation is correct.

The next river westward on the Ross map is the "Tanzipao," the present Tangipahoa, flowing through the parish of the same name, which bounds St. Tammany parish on the west. The name is derived from the two Choctaw words, *tonche*, "corn," and *pahoha*, "cob" or "inside;" it was literally translated by them "corncob."

During his extended tour through the southern part of the country Bartram traversed Lake Pontchartrain, to which he makes the following reference:[b]

> Next day [circa June, 1777] early we got under way, pursuing our former course, nearly Westward; keeping the North shore [of Pontchartrain] several leagues . . . [we] set sail again, and came up to the mouth of the beautiful Taensapaoa, which takes that name from a nation of Indians, who formerly possessed the territories lying on its banks, which are fertile and delightful regions.

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[a] Margry, Découvertes, v, 459, Paris, 1883.

[b] William Bartram, Travels through North and South Carolina, etc., 422, London, 1792.

The identity of the Tangipahoa tribe has not been clearly established, although there is no question that they belonged to the same linguistic stock as the Acolapissa and the Choctaw; all were practically the same people, and they may even have constituted one of the component bands of the Acolapissa. They are said to have been destroyed about the time of the arrival of the French in lower Louisiana.[a] Until a few years ago more than one hundred Choctaw lived in the vicinity of Bayou Lacomb, Bayou Castine, and near the Chefuncte river; but by act of Congress of July 1, 1902, they were persuaded to remove to the Indian Territory and receive an allotment of land. The settlement on Bayou Castine, not far east of Mandeville, may have been on the site of the village of the "Colapissas" on "Castembayouque," mentioned by Pénicaut.

From this brief sketch it will be seen that ever since the discovery of that part of Louisiana by the French, the northern shore of Lake Pontchartrain has been occupied by tribes of the Muskhogean stock. At the present time it is not possible to determine whether the Indians living at Bayou Lacomb are descendants of the Acolapissa, or whether they represent a small offshoot from the main Choctaw tribe. According to the beliefs and statements of these Indians, their ancestors lived in that place for many generations. The present inhabitants know the locations of, and point out, their ancient burying grounds, where, they say, the "old people" for five or six generations are known to have been interred. It is not at all improbable that the present Indians are Acolapissa rather than Choctaw; then again, they may represent both tribes. The Choctaw villages were probably never far distant from some of those belonging to the Acolapissa and, as all spoke the same language, there must have been considerable intercourse between them.

As has been shown, one people has occupied the area under consideration ever since it became known to the European; consequently it is reasonable to attribute to the same tribes the prehistoric remains found in that locality, none of which, however, gives evidence of great antiquity.

EVIDENCES OF EARLY OCCUPANCY

Several mounds are found within the area now under consideration. The largest of these (pl. 3) is situated about 200 yards north of the right bank of Chinchuba creek, and about 1½ miles in a direct line north of Lake Pontchartrain. The mound has an elevation of between 4 and 5 feet; it is circular in form and has an average diameter of approximately 90 feet.

[a] Dr. J. R. Swanton, in forthcoming *Bulletin 43 of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley and Northern Coast of the Gulf of Mexico, gives a description of the tribes and the history, so far as known, of their movements.

A trench was run from near the center of the mound, extending northeast 47 feet and continuing beyond the edge of the artificial work (fig. 1). This was evidently a domiciliary mound. Two fire beds were discovered. The first (*a*), near the center of the mound, had a diameter of a trifle more than 2 feet; it was slightly concave in form and was situated at a depth of 15 inches below the surface of the mound. The second fire bed (*b*) was discovered near the edge of the artificial work, evidently on or near the original surface; this was similar to *a* in form, size, and situation, but sloped toward the northeast. Both fire beds showed evidence of considerable use. As a result of the heat, the earth was discolored to a depth of from 6 to 8 inches beneath the surface of the hearth, and to a depth of several inches it had become quite hard.

The mound was formed of a compact, homogeneous mass of clay and sand. There was practically no surface soil or vegetal mold, consequently it was not possible to trace the old sod line, and thus to distinguish the artificial from the natural formation.

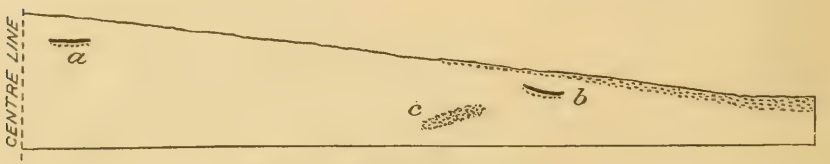

FIG. 1.—Section of mound excavation.

A deposit of shells (*c*) was revealed a short distance from fire bed *b*, as shown in the drawing; this extended in a general direction from northwest to southeast and was examined for a distance of 10 feet. At the point of intersection by the trench the mass of shells lay from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 feet below the surface of the mound. The width of the deposit was about $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet and its thickness 10 inches.

For reasons stated above, it was not possible to determine whether the shells rested upon the original surface or filled an artificial excavation. They appeared, however, to be below the original surface, as indicated on the drawing.

The shells were those of an edible clam (*Rangia cuneata* Gray) found in vast quantities in Lake Pontchartrain. Intermingled with the shells were quantities of bones of deer, rabbits, and alligators,[a] that had served as food, many having been broken open for the removal of the marrow. Fragments of many pottery vessels also were recovered, but no entire objects of any sort were found, nor was a single piece of stone discovered in any part of the excavation.

[a] These were identified by Dr. M. W. Lyon, Jr., of the U. S. National Museum, to whom the writer desires to express his indebtedness.

Examples of pottery from the shell deposit are shown in plate 4. Some of the pieces may be described as follows:

(*a*, *b*) Fragments of two vessels showing decoration on the inner, or concave, surfaces—a rather unusual form, probably similar to the shallow dish discovered by Moore in a mound on Black Warrior river, Alabama.[a] (*c*) Two pieces of a large vessel. These had evidently been held together by a cord or sinew passed through the two perforations and tied. The fracture between the perforations occurred while the vessel was still in use. (*d*) A fragment of a very large and exceptionally well decorated vessel. The straight upper edge of this piece measures 3½ inches. By measurement the curvature of the rim shows the vessel to have been between 23 and 24 inches in diameter. The color is dark gray; the surface is very smooth and polished. The decoration was probably incised after the clay was dry, but before the vessel was fired. Smaller fragments of the same vessel were also discovered. (*e*) Small fragment of a rim of a rather large vessel, having a perforated projection through which a cord was probably passed. (*f*) A conventionalized form of (*e*) showing a projection, but no longer perforated.

Although some of the pieces represent jars and vessels of exceptionally good workmanship, the majority appear to have been rather crudely made and decorated. Both straight and curved lines appear in the ornamentation; these were evidently added after the clay had become dry. But the pits in specimens *g*, *h*, and *i* clearly were made while the material was in a plastic state.

All the pottery shows a tempering of finely pulverized shell.

The pipe (pl. 5, *a*) was the most interesting object found in the shell deposit. According to Mr. J. D. McGuire, this belongs to the oldest type of pipe found in the lower Mississippi valley; under his classification it is of the biconical form, similar to the modern Choctaw pipes shown in plate 14. The maximum diameter of the bowl is 1⅜ inches; it is rather shallow, being only ⅞ of an inch deep.

As has already been stated, no examples of stone objects were discovered in the mound, although these are found in the surrounding country. A piece of indurated clay (pl. 5, *b*), however, showing evidence of having been used, probably as a smoother, was unearthed in the deposit of shells. Typical examples of stone objects are represented on the same plate, namely: four points (*c*, *d*, *e*, *f*) found a short distance south of the mound; two scrapers (*g*, *i*) made of red jasper, found on the surface south of the mound; a jasper bead (*h*) having a biconical perforation; and three pieces, *k*, *l*, *m*, found

[a] Clarence B. Moore, Certain Aboriginal Remains of the Black Warrior River, fig. 92, p. 192, Philadelphia, 1905.

on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain. A high polish has resulted from the action of the sand and water. Arrow points of white quartzite have also been found in the locality, but these were probably made far to the northeast. Small grooved axes are likewise met with, but they are quite rare. The jasper of which the specimens figured were made was obtained in the form of pebbles from the beds of certain streams in St. Tammany parish.

South and east of the mound referred to above, for a distance of 200 feet or more, the surface was covered with shells of the kind mentioned (*Rangia cuneata* Gray) to a depth of from 4 to 8 inches. Intermingled with the shells were fragments of pottery and traces of bones, greatly decayed. A similar deposit was encountered on the opposite side of Chinchuba creek, near the great live oak commonly called "Père Rouquette's oak" (pl. 6). Some shells and a few pieces of pottery were found exposed upon the surface beneath the branches of the oak, on the very spot where the Choctaw were wont to gather to hear the teachings of Père Rouquette. These latter examples of pottery and likewise the shells appear to be of comparatively recent origin, and were undoubtedly left there by the Choctaw not more than one or two generations ago. As the pottery is similar to that found in the deposit of shells beneath the mound, all should probably be attributed to the same people.

Several burials are said to have been discovered in a low mound a short distance west of the Chinchuba mound. The work is reputed to have been done some years ago; but the writer was unable to gain any definite information respecting it.

Place Names in St. Tammany Parish

As before shown, certain names still in use were known and applied to the streams at the time of the earliest French exploration of the region. Therefore it is not unreasonable to suppose that many, if not all, of the names now employed by the Choctaw to designate the rivers and bayous were used in precolonial days.

The names are given here as they appear on the maps of the United States General Land Office, together with the English translations.

Abita.—The name of a spring, and also of a river which is one of the principal tributaries of the Chefuncte river. The meaning of this word is not known to the Choctaw. They say that an old man who called himself Abeta′ came from far away and made his home near the spring. But this happened many years ago, and no Indian now living ever saw him. They insist that *abita* is not a Choctaw word. The name at once suggests the *Abiṫka* of the Upper Creeks, and may have been derived from that source. The man who took up his abode near the spring may have been a Creek.

Bayou Castine.—The Creoles claim the name was derived from Castagne, the name of an early French settler. But the Choctaw say it was taken from their name of the bayou, *Caste* ("fleas"), so named on account of the large number of fleas found there. Now, as the name has been shown to have been in use when the French first entered the region, we should accept the Choctaw explanation as probably correct.

Chinchuba creek.—Given the same name by the Choctaw. *Chinchuba* in the Choctaw language means "alligator."

Chefuncte river.—Known by the same name by the Choctaw, the word meaning "chinkapin" (*Castanea pumila*).

Ponchitoawa creek.—The same in Choctaw. The word is translated "singing hair."

Bogue Falaya.—From the Choctaw *bogu*, "river," and *falaya*, "long."

Cane bayou.—Known to the Choctaw as *chela'ha*, "noisy;" said by them to be so named on account of the noise caused by the wind blowing through the canes.

Bayou Lacomb.—Called by the Choctaw *butchu'wa*, "squeezing." Their settlement is also known by the same name.

Pearl river.—Known to the Choctaw at the present time as Hatcha. The same name is applied to the settlement.

Lake Pontchartrain.—The Choctaw name for the lake, as well as for any wide expanse of water, is Okwa'ta (*okwa*—water, the suffix *ta* meaning "large" or "wide"). The name of the Gulf of Mexico, as given on the Lamhatty map of 1707,[a] is Ouquôdky.

MATERIAL CULTURE

Habitations

The primitive habitations of the Choctaw who lived on the north shore of Pontchartrain are described as having been of two types, circular and rectangular. The frames were formed of small saplings; the tops and sides were constructed of palmetto thatch.[b]

According to the present inhabitants, many of the circular houses were large, affording shelter for many persons. Only one door was made, this in most cases facing the south. A fire was kindled on the ground within the lodge, the smoke passing out through an opening made for the purpose at the top near the center.

The later form of habitation is shown in plate 12, *b*. It will be seen that the sides, formed of thin planks, are arranged in the same way as the palmetto thatch of former days.

[a] *American Anthropologist*, n. s., x, no. 4, 570, 1908.

[b] A house of this kind is pictured in plate 3, from a photograph taken near Mandeville, St. Tammany parish, about 1879, which was secured by the late Dr. A. S. Gatschet. The palmetto house is said to have been in use within the last ten years.

Food: Supply and Preparation

Unfortunately, comparatively few of the articles of food used by the primitive Choctaw are known to the members of the tribe of whom this paper treats. They are able to give, however, the names of a few plants that are even now used.

Ahe (Smilax laurifolia).—The hard bulbous roots are pounded fine, a small amount of water is added if necessary, and the paste is made into small cakes, which are fried in grease. The Choctaw say that formerly bear's grease was always used for this purpose. *Ahe* is spoken of as having been one of their favorite foods.

Ahelo'sa (Phaseolus diversifolius).—The roots are first thoroughly boiled, then mashed, and served as food.

Nuse (acorns of the Quercus aquatica).—These acorns were pounded in a wooden mortar until fine. The meal was then put into an openwork basket and water was poured through several times. It was then boiled or used as cornmeal.

Okesok (nuts of the Juglans squamosa).—The nuts were cracked and the meat was removed. When a sufficient quantity had been obtained, the meat was pounded and made into a paste, which was beaten up in a small quantity of boiling water. The mixture was then eaten as a broth or soup.

Kombo ashish.—The leaves of *Laurus sassafras* are gathered during the autumn, usually about the middle of October, after they have turned red. They are thoroughly dried in the sun and air, without the use of artificial heat. They are then pounded in a wooden mortar until reduced to a very fine powder, which is sifted to remove all hard particles. The powder is again placed in the mortar and pounded until as fine as it can be made, when it is ready for use. About a teaspoonful of this powder added to a kettle of soup gives it a glutinous quality and the flavor also is relished. This powder is highly prized by the Creoles of Louisiana.

Tonche (Zea mays).—Corn is allowed to ripen and harden on the cob; then it is removed and dried thoroughly over hot ashes. Next, it is put into a wooden mortar (*kîte*), plate 7, and pounded with a wooden pestle (*kêtoke*), plate 8, after which it is placed in a winnowing basket (*obfko'*), plate 9. The *obfko'* is held horizontal, with the flat edge away from the operator; it is jerked back and forth, up and down, thereby throwing the crushed grain a foot or more into the air. The lighter particles are carried off and fall into the large flat basket (*tapa*), plate 9, resting on the ground. The portion of the grain remaining in the *obfko'* is again pounded in the mortar and subsequently passed through a sieve (*ishsho'ha*), plate 9. The fine particles that pass through the sieve are known as *botu;* the coarser

portion remaining in the sieve is called *tonlache*. Much of the *botu* was parched and eaten mixed with water; but most of the coarser *tonlache* was boiled either with or without meat. Corn is said to have been extensively raised by the Choctaw during past years. Beans and potatoes were also raised, but no other vegetables are remembered.

Wild crabapples are gathered and dried on a frame arranged over a bed of hot ashes and coals. This appears to be the only fruit that is preserved in any manner and kept for future use. Many kinds of haws and berries grow in great quantities in the vicinity of Bayou Lacomb, but it is said they are never dried, being eaten only when fresh.

Honoshe (rice).—The Choctaw have a very simple method of preparing rice. After being gathered and dried, it is pounded in a wooden mortar (*kîte*), with a wooden pestle (*kêtoke*), care being taken not to crush the grain more than can be avoided. Next the chaff is removed by shaking the grain up and down in a winnowing basket (*obfko'*), the chaff falling into the large *tapa*. If all the husks are not loosened during the first pounding, the grain is again pounded in the mortar and later winnowed. It is then sifted to remove the broken grains, and afterward washed and dried.

Game was formerly abundant throughout lower Louisiana and venison and bear's meat were important articles of food, either fresh or dried. The Choctaw method of preserving meat may be described as follows: Thin strips were hung on sticks or spread over a frame, or in the thick smoke from a fire on which green or wet wood had been placed. Meat thus prepared during the cold months would remain good throughout the following spring and summer. Large quantities were formerly prepared in this way. Pork is now similarly treated.

As they live where fish are abundant and easily caught, it is remarkable that the Choctaw seldom, if ever, eat them. At times, however, large trout and shrimp were dried in the sun for future use.

As before stated, a large area surrounding the mound near Chinchuba, and also in the vicinity of Père Rouquette's last chapel, is covered with the shells of the *Rangia cuneata* Gray, these clams having been brought up the creek from the shore of Lake Pontchartrain. That they constituted an important article of food is evident from the vast quantity of shells found mixed with charcoal, broken pottery, and many bones of turkey, deer, and other animals, none of which appear to be very ancient, and which consequently must have been left by the Choctaw. The women at Bayou Lacomb say, however, they have never eaten clams, although the "old people" may have done so. The present natives know of the accumulated mass of shells, and

as they are scattered over the site of one of their old settlements they express the opinion that the shells must have been gathered by the Choctaw ("the old people") who lived there.

Ilex cassine.—This grows throughout the region and some specimens were found near Bayou Lacomb, but the Choctaw have no knowledge of a tea ever having been made of it. This is rather remarkable as the plant was formerly so extensively used by the Southern tribes.

Dress and Personal Decoration

HAIR

Men wore their hair long enough to enable them to make two braids, one on each side of the head. In front the hair was cut straight across, above the eyebrows. Women allowed their hair to grow very long. Their ancient method of wearing it is shown in the photograph of the old woman, Heleema (Louisa), plate 10.

PAINTING

Both men and women painted, especially when dressed for dancing. The women remember having seen blue, red, yellow, and green used on their faces. They say there were no special designs and that no combination of colors had any meaning. One of the favorite patterns, the only one they remember, was a yellow crescent, outlined with blue, that was painted on both cheeks. This was used by both men and women and represented a new moon in the dark blue sky.

TATTOOING

Tattooing (*hanchahale*) was practised by both men and women, but only to a very limited extent. An old woman who died a few years ago is said to have had lines of tattooing extending from the corners of her mouth across both cheeks to her ears. According to the writer's informants, no totemic devices were ever represented, and tattooing was done only as a means of ornamenting the face. In some cases the shoulders were tattooed, but no other part of the body. The method of tattooing practised was as follows: A needle was used to puncture the skin and soot caused by a fire of yellow pine was rubbed over the surface. This was then wiped off and more soot rubbed in, to make certain that all the punctures were filled. The soot gave a bluish tinge to the dots. No other substance or color was ever employed.

ORNAMENTS

Quantities of glass beads and much bright-colored ribbon are said to have been obtained from the traders. The Choctaw are very

fond of bright and gaudy colors. Among the older men are remembered several who were experts in the art of making silver ornaments. One small pin is shown in plate 14; this was made from a silver dime and the date 1856 still may be clearly read on the back. Larger ornaments were made from larger coins. Pendant earrings were also fashioned, having glass beads attached to the lower part. When dancing, the men often wore strings of small brass bells around each leg, below the knee. These bells were highly prized by the older generation. Feathers do not seem to have been held in great esteem, although they were worn.

Artifacts

Comparatively few articles are now made by the Choctaw, much of their ancient art having been forgotten. At the present time they purchase the necessary tools and implements at the stores, and other objects are no longer used.

The list which follows is believed to include all things of native origin now made by the Choctaw at Bayou Lacomb:

WOOD

Mortars and pestles (see pp. 8, 9).
Scrapers, two forms of, used in preparing skins (see pp. 11, 12).
Drum (see p. 22).
Ball club (see p. 20).
Blowgun and darts (see p. 18).
Canoes (see p. 18).

STONE

Pieces of chert or jasper are sometimes used with a steel to "strike fire."

LEATHER

Straps for carrying baskets.
Narrow strips used on the ball clubs.
Untanned skins used for the heads of drums.
Long strips of tanned deer skin used as lashes for whips by the drivers of ox teams employed in the lumber industry.

The Choctaw method of tanning is as follows:

(*a*) Skins to be tanned soft, without the hair. A hole is dug in the ground, its size being determined by the number of skins to be prepared. The walls and bottom are made smooth and water is poured in, which, on account of the nature of the clay and sand formation, remains several hours. The skins are then put into the water, where they are allowed to remain several hours, or sometimes during the night. A hole filled with water, containing several skins, is shown beneath the ax handle in plate 11, *a*.

After the skin has become sufficiently soaked and softened, it is taken from the water and spread over the end of a beam, as shown in plate 11, *a*. In this position the hair is readily removed by the use of an instrument resembling a modern drawknife, and,

although a piece of metal is now used in the wooden handle, it is highly probable that stone or bone was formerly employed for the same purpose.

The hair having been removed, the skin is placed in a mortar, or in a hole cut in a log (see pl. 11, *b*) which serves the purpose. Eggs and cornmeal mixed with a little water are then poured over the skin, which is thoroughly beaten with a long wooden pestle.

The skin is then taken from the mortar and wrung rather dry; a number of small holes are cut around the edge and through these cords are passed, which serve to hold the skin stretched between two upright posts, as shown in plate 12, *a*. While in this position it is scraped and all particles of flesh are removed. The instrument now employed consists of a piece of metal attached to a long wooden handle. A large bone probably served as the primitive implement.

The skin remains stretched until dry, when it is, of course, rather stiff. To soften it, the skin is pulled back and forth over the top of a stake driven into the ground, which has been made smooth and round to prevent tearing the skin (see pl. 12, *a*, on the right).

This process of tanning renders the skin soft and white. The Choctaw claim that it is a very ancient method of preparing skins. Eggs of various kinds, they say, are used with equally good results. The method described, including the use of corn and eggs, may have been followed by all the Southern tribes.

Lawson,[a] in writing of the Indians of Carolina more than two centuries ago, referred to their use of "young indian corn, beaten to a pulp," in the place of the brains of animals, in preparing skins. "Young indian corn" would probably have about the same effect as the mixture of eggs and cornmeal.

If the skins are to be smoked, a process that renders them more durable, a hole a foot or more in depth is dug in which a fire is kept until a bed of hot ashes accumulates. On this are put pieces of rotten oak, no other wood being used for this purpose; these are not permitted to blaze, as the more smoke that arises the better it is for the skins. These, already tanned soft and white and perfectly dry, are stretched over the hole and allowed to remain in the smoke an hour or more.

(*b*) Skins to be tanned soft, with the hair remaining. If the skin is dry and stiff it is first softened with clear water, after which it is spread over a beam and scraped on the inner surface to remove all flesh. The inside is then thoroughly rubbed with a mixture of eggs, cornmeal, and water, great care being taken not to wet the outside, or fur. When the skin is about dry, it is pulled and worked back and forth over the top of a stake, as already explained, after which it remains soft.

POTTERY

Pipes (*ashu^{n}'kwa*) are still made and used by the Choctaw. Two specimens fashioned by Ahojeobe (Emil John), plate 13, are shown in plate 14. These are made of a white clay that outcrops in certain places beneath the superstratum of yellow clay and sand along the banks of the bayous. There is no tempering of sand or pulverized shell, only the clay being used.

The clay is moistened and kneaded until the mass is uniformly damp throughout. The pipe is then modeled and allowed to dry. The incised decoration is added before the pipe is burned in a bed of hot ashes and glowing coals. When thoroughly burned it turns rather dark in color, whereupon it is removed from the fire and immediately immersed in a bowl of grease, which is absorbed by the

[a] The History of Carolina, London, 1714; reprint, 339, Raleigh, 1860.

clay and carbonized by the intense heat. This process causes the pottery to turn black and also adds a certain luster to the surface.

Herein probably is to be found the explanation of the origin of the rich black ware obtained from mounds and burials in Louisiana and Mississippi.

The use of white clay by the Choctaw is in harmony with a statement made by Lawson[a] concerning the Indians of Carolina, about the year 1690: "Where they find a vein of white clay, fit for their purpose, [they] make tobacco pipes."

The Choctaw have a strange superstitious belief in connection with the making of pottery. They say that no person except the one who is making the object should see it until after it has been removed from the fire. If another person chances to look on an object while it is being made or before it is burned, the Choctaw believe that it will crack as soon as placed near the fire.

Pottery bowls are no longer made, although they are remembered by the living Indians, who recall having seen bowls provided with three small feet; consequently bowls must have been in use only a short time ago.

HORN

Spoons are made by the Choctaw from cow horns (*wak lape'she sti'mpa;* literally, cow horn spoon).

Two good examples are represented in plate 14.

In describing the manners and customs of the Choctaw, Adair[b] alluded to "their wooden dishes, and spoons made of wood and buffalo horn;" consequently the making of spoons is a continuation of an ancient art.

BASKETS

The Choctaw are excellent basket makers, although their work at the present time is greatly inferior to that of a generation ago. The best baskets are made of narrow strips of cane, *Arundinaria macrosperma* (Choctaw, *uske*), though now, at Bayou Lacomb, they are using the stems of palmetto, *Serrenoa serrulata* (Choctaw, *tala*), as cane is no longer found near-by, and to obtain it a journey has to be made to Pearl river, some fifteen or twenty miles away.

The baskets now made, with few exceptions, are very crude and rather poorly formed. Brilliant aniline dyes are used in the place of the more subdued native colors. Large numbers of small baskets provided with handles are made and exchanged in the stores of the near-by towns for various goods; these are purchased by strangers and taken away as examples of native art.

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[a] The History of Carolina, London, 1714; reprint, 338, Raleigh, 1860.

[b] James Adair, History of the American Indians. . . 421, London, 1775.

Dyes

The only colors utilized by the Choctaw before they obtained aniline dyes were yellow, red, and black. These, together with the natural cane, gave them four colors to combine in their work.

The old Cherokee basket now in the British Museum, known to have been obtained in Carolina in 1721, displays the same colors—yellow, red, and a very dark brown, or black. It is evident that these were the only colors used by the Southern Indians in their basket work.

The Choctaw method of making the dye and coloring the material is simple.

Yellow.—To make a yellow dye they gather a quantity of roots of the *Rumex crispus* L. (yellow dock), which when dry are reduced to small pieces by pounding in a wooden mortar. The dye is then extracted by boiling in water. The material to be dyed is placed in the infusion and allowed to boil until the desired color is obtained.

Red.—Equal parts of the bark of the *Quercus texana* (red oak) and the *Nyssa aquatica* L. (black gum) are burned to a fine ash. Water is then added to the ashes, forming a thick paste. The material previously dyed yellow, as above described, is then placed in a vessel and the ash paste poured over it. After a few hours the strong alkali turns the yellow to a deep red. The intensity of the color depends on the length of time the material remains in the ashes. If, during the first process, the material is dyed dark orange, the application of the paste causes it to turn reddish purple.

Black or dark brown.—At the present time the Choctaw of Bayou Lacomb do not make a black or dark brown dye. They claim, however, that the "old people" made such a dye from the bark of a tree that grows in the north but not in this region, referring probably to the walnut.

In addition to the dyes enumerated above the Choctaw make and use a red paint, but this is seldom applied to baskets. It is made thus: Equal parts of the bark of the *Quercus texana* (red oak) and the *Quercus obtusiloba* (post oak) and a smaller quantity of the bark of the *Quercus virens* (live oak) are boiled together until the liquid begins to thicken. The bark is then removed and the liquid is again boiled until still thicker. Just before removing the mixture from the fire a small piece of yellow pine pitch is added and, when melted, is thoroughly mixed with the extract. The latter is then removed from the fire and is ready for use. The drum (pl. 7) was decorated with paint of this sort.

Types

Kishi' (pack basket), plates 15, 16. The bottom is rectangular; the top flares on two sides. Extreme height, 21 inches. Made entirely

of natural colored cane, no dyes being used. The strap (*aseta*) passes through four loops of the cane, as are shown in the illustration. This particular basket was made at Bayou Lacomb about five years ago by Pisatuntema (Emma), plate 17.

Taposhake shakapa (basket elbow [shape]).—A very old specimen of this peculiar basket is shown in plate 18. This is made of cane, some parts being colored yellow and red with native dyes.

Taposhake chufa (basket pointed).—A typical specimen is shown in plate 18. This is claimed by the Choctaw to be one of the oldest forms made by them.

Covered baskets.—These are no longer made, although they are remembered by women as they were fashioned a generation ago. Two examples are here shown: (*a*) Plate 19, *a*. This is a very large double basket, formed of two distinct thicknesses of cane; the lower part is 18 inches in height. The basket is rectangular in form. The cover is about 5 inches in depth. The ornamentation is formed of canes dyed red and yellow. The specimen is a rare example of Choctaw basketry. (*b*) Plate 19, *b*. A very old basket of Choctaw make. This is a double weave, made entirely of natural colored cane, no dyes having been used. The dimensions are: Length, 8¼ in.; width, 4 in.; depth, 5 in.

Another form of basket, no longer made but formerly common, was designed to hang on the wall. The basket proper was rectangular or slightly oval in shape. One side extended 8 or 10 inches above the other and was provided with a loop at the top, by means of which the basket was suspended from a nail or peg.

The sieve, winnowing basket, and large flat basket, or *tapa*, are described in the section treating of the preparation of food (pp. 8, 9).

The Choctaw at Bayou Lacomb have no knowledge of mats ever having been made or used in their tribe.

CORDS

Narrow strips of the bark of the cypress tree (*Cupressus disticha;* Choctaw, *shamgo'lo*) serve as cords, which are employed for various purposes. Spanish moss was never used to make ropes.

METAL

Ornaments, as pins, earrings, etc., were formerly made by hammering silver coins until they became thin and then perforating them in various designs.

SOCIAL CULTURE

It is interesting to know that many of the primitive beliefs and customs of the people here dealt with have persisted to the present day, notwithstanding the fact that the Choctaw have been in close

contact with Europeans for about two centuries, and under the direct influence of Christian missionaries for several generations.

The Tribe

By the people of the tribe, or, more correctly, that portion of the tribe now under consideration, they themselves are called the *Chata' ogla* or the Chata' people or family. According to them, the first word can not be translated as it is merely a proper name.

The great tribe is divided into many distinct subdivisions, each of which has a special name. The oldest male member of each subtribe, or subdivision, of the great tribe, was the recognized leader or chief of that division or family. These leaders were the ones to be consulted whenever advice was required, and, as will be seen later, they played an important part in the marriage ceremony of the tribe. The subdivisions of the tribe were numerous and no two members of the same division (*ogla*) were allowed to marry.

The divisions known to have lived in this region are:

Kasha'pa ogla, or the Half people.—They lived at Bayou Lacomb and the remnant of the tribe now dwelling there belong to this division. The name of the village was Butchu'wa.

Shatje ogla, or the Crayfish people.—The home of this family was near Chinchuba, some twelve miles west of Bayou Lacomb. Toshkachîto (pl. 20) is said to be the last member of the family.

Inhulata ogla, or the Prairie people.—This was considered the largest and probably the most important division of the Choctaw living in the region. Their principal settlement, Hatcha, was located on Pearl river.

Other divisions, known by the people at Bayou Lacomb to have lived in the country a short distance northward, are:

Tula'îksa' ogla, or Fall-in-bunches people.

Chufaîksa' ogla, or Bunches-of-flies people.

Shunkwane ogla, or Ant people.

Haⁿna'le ogla, or Six people.

Unfortunately the people at Bayou Lacomb know very little respecting the tribal organization and customs.

Brief List of Words Used by the Choctaw at Bayou Lacomb

arrow	*ino'ke*	coon	*sha'we*
basket	*taposhake*	corn	*tonche*
bayou	*kwahonoshe'*	cow	*wak*
black	*losa*	crayfish	*shatje*
blowgun	*kaklu'mpa*	dart (for blowgun)	*shumă'nte*
blue	*ocha'kwa*	devil (evil spirit)	*nanapolo*
bow	*tansheba'ta*	dog	*ofe*
cane	*uske*	drum	*the'ba*
cat	*kăto*	eight	*ontuchina*

fire	*lowak*	prairie	*inhulata*
five	*takla'pe*	red	*huma*
four	*hŏshta'*	rice	*honoshe*
god (good spirit)	*aba*	river	*bogu*
green	*chamale'*	seven	*o^{n}togola*
gun	*tanapo*	sieve	*ishsho'ha*
half	*kasha'pa*	six	*ha^{n}na'le*
horn (cow's)	*lape'she*	spoon	*sti'mpa*
hundred (one)	*taleba chafa*	strap (for basket)	*aseta*
knife	*bashpo*	sumac	*bushucha*
lightning	*mala'tha*	tattooing	*hanchahale*
long	*falaya*	ten	*pokwole*
magnolia	*katlaha*	three	*tuche^{n}'na*
mortar	*kîte*	thunder	*heloha*
nine	*chale*	tobacco	*achumon*
one	*chafa*	two	*tuglo*
opossum	*soka'ta*	water	*okwa*
palmetto	*tala*	white	*tobe*
pestle	*kêtoke*	winnowing basket	*obfko'*
pipe	*ashu^{n}'kwa*	yellow	*lokwana*

The Divisions of the Year

It is asserted by the women at Bayou Lacomb that the Choctaw year was divided into twelve moons; but it is highly probable that thirteen—not twelve—is correct. The native method of reckoning the divisions of the year is no longer practised, nor do the present Choctaw remember the names of all the moons; they assert, however, that the year begins in December instead of the first of January. The only names they can recall are:

December——*Una'fa hashe,* Cold moon.
February——*Hashe kapo'sha,* Moon of snow.
March——*Hash'mahale,* Moon of wind.
April——*Tans hashe,* Corn [planting] moon.
July——*Hash' luwak,* Moon of fire.

The year is divided into two seasons, which in turn are subdivided, making four seasons in all:

Spring——*Tofa ape.*
Summer——*Tofa laspa.*
Autumn——*Unafa ape.*
Winter——*Unafa kapese.*

Beliefs concerning Eclipses

Eclipse of the sun, *ashe oklelega* ("sun dark or dirty"). The Choctaw say that since the sun works every day he becomes dirty and smoked from the great fire within. It is necessary therefore for him to rest and clean himself, after doing which he shines the brighter. During the eclipse he is removing the accumulated dirt.

A similar explanation applies to the dark of the moon, their term being:

nînaahukwa *oklelega*, *koshsholeje*, or
moon dark or dirty, cleaning

Beliefs concerning Thunder and Lightning

Thunder and lightning are to the Choctaw two great birds—Thunder (*Heloha*), the female; Lightning (*Mala'tha*), the male. When they hear a great noise in the clouds, Heloha is laying an egg, "just like a bird," in the cloud, which is her nest. When a tree is shattered the result is said to have been caused by Mala'tha, the male, he being the stronger; but when a tree is only slightly damaged, the effect is attributed to Heloha, the weaker.

Great trouble or even war was supposed to follow the sight of a comet.

Transportation

Dugouts were employed on the creeks and bayous, but evidently only to a small extent. The Creoles make dugouts at the present time which they use on the streams of St. Tammany parish. These are hollowed from single pieces of black gum; most of them measure from 8 to 12 feet in length.

Many of the roads now used probably follow the courses of Indian trails. A road leading from just west of Chinchuba to Lake Pontchartrain is known as the "Indian road;" this passes within a few feet of the mound described on page 3, and evidently follows the trail that led from the settlement about the mound to the shore of Lake Pontchartrain.

Hunting and Fishing

The primitive blowgun was used until recently in hunting squirrels, rabbits, and various birds. Only one specimen was found at Bayou Lacomb; this was said to have been made some ten years ago. The man Toshkachîto (Joe Silestine) is shown in plate 20 holding the blowgun in position for shooting. The blowgun (*kaklu'mpa*) is about 7 feet in length; it is made of a single piece of cane (*Arundinaria macrosperma*; Choctaw, *uske*), formed into a tube by perforation of the joints, which was given a smooth bore of uniform diameter throughout. The darts (*shumă'nte*) are made of either small, slender canes or pieces of hard yellow pine, sharpened at one end; they are from 15 to 18 inches in length. The lower end is wrapped for a distance of 4 or 5 inches with a narrow band of cloth having a frayed edge, or a piece of soft tanned skin is used. The effect of this band is to expand and fill the bore of the gun, a result that could not possibly be secured by the use of feathers, as in the case of ordinary arrows.

Bows and arrows were formerly used, but for many generations the Choctaw have been in possession of firearms obtained from the French, the Spanish, and later from the Americans.

Curiously enough the people at Bayou Lacomb do not care for fish or fishing, although quantities of excellent fish could be taken from the bayous and from Lake Pontchartrain. The Choctaw say they formerly had fish traps in the bayous, but seem not to remember how they were constructed.

Games and Pastimes

The Choctaw appear to have had rather few games of chance. Among those described to the writer is one that closely resembles the moccasin game of the Algonquian and other widely separated tribes in America. This is said to have been played by the "old people" and is probably one of the oldest Choctaw games. It was described thus:

Lake'lomi.—Twelve men were required in playing this game. They knelt or sat on the ground in two rows, or "sides," facing each other, six players in each row. Seven hats were placed on the ground in a line between the two rows of players.

The player who was to start the game and who was always at one end of his row held in one hand a small stone or shot. With his other hand he raised all the hats in order, placing under one of these the stone or shot; during the entire performance he sang a particular song. After the stone or shot had been placed, the player sitting opposite him guessed under which hat it lay. If he did not succeed in three guesses, the leader removed the object and again hid it under either the same or another hat. Then the second player on the opposite side had three guesses. If a player guessed under which hat the object was hidden, he in turn became the leader.

Unfortunately, those who described the game could not recall how the points were counted. They agreed, however, that the side having the greater number of points made by the six players combined, won.

Another game of chance, one that seems to have been a favorite and much played in this region, was—

Tanje boska, or corn game.—This was played, the writer was informed, with either five or seven kernels of corn blackened on one side. Holding all the grains in one hand, the players tossed them on the ground, each player having three throws. The one making the greatest number of points in the aggregate, won. Each "black" turned up counted 1 point; *all* "white" turned up counted either 5 or 7 points, according to the number of kernels used. Any number of persons could play at the same time, but usually there were only two.

Culin, who witnessed this game at Mandeville, some ten miles from Bayou Lacomb, in 1901, described it as played with eight grains of corn;[a] hence it seems evident that no regular number was employed. The count, as described by Culin, is also somewhat different from that now followed at Bayou Lacomb.

The ball game, played by many tribes throughout the country, was by far the most important game of the Choctaw, but it has been described so often that mere mention of it is all that is here required. For full information on the subject the reader is referred to Doctor Culin's monograph, above cited, in which are brought together many

[a] Stewart Culin, Games of the North American Indians, in *Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, 146, 1907.

references and accounts of the game. A variation of the game as now played when there are few players was witnessed by the writer at Bayou Lacomb in February, 1909. This was played in the following manner:

To'le.—The players were divided into two equal groups, or sides, which may be designated A and B. Two stakes, each about 10 feet in height and only a few inches in diameter, served as goals; these were about 200 feet apart. One-third of the A players were on the B side of the field and one-third of the B players were near their opponents' goal. One player belonging to each side remained in the middle of the field. The ball was put in play by being thrown from one end of the field to the two players in the middle. No rackets were used, the ball being caught in the hands and thrown or held while the player endeavored to reach his opponents' goal. To score a point a player was required to touch the goal post with the ball, or if the ball was thrown and hit the post, the play likewise counted. The first side to score a chosen number of points won the game. This game is seldom played, and the older game, formerly played with rackets (*kapocha*), has not been played for several years.

During the hot months of the year a favorite pastime of the boys and men consisted in trying to swim blindfolded a wide stream to a certain point on the opposite bank. The first to reach the goal was declared the winner.

Somewhat similar amusement participated in by the boys and young men consisted in rolling down hills while wrapped and tied in blankets or skins, the first to reach a certain line being the winner. As there are few hills in the vicinity of Bayou Lacomb, they resorted to the sloping banks of streams or bayous, but avoided the water.

At the present time both men and children play marbles, drawing rings on the ground and following the child's game.

The children play also "tag" after the manner of white children.

Various other games and pastimes were undoubtedly known and practised in former days, but these have been forgotten by the Choctaw of whom this paper treats. The game of *chungke* may never have been in vogue with them, although it was played extensively by the main part of the Choctaw tribe.

The woman's game described by Captain Romans in 1775 [a] is not known to them.

Dances and Music

The Choctaw living at Bayou Lacomb have one dance ceremony, which is in reality a series of seven distinct dances, performed in rotation and always in the same order. These dances are as follows:

1. *Năněna hitkla* (Man dance)

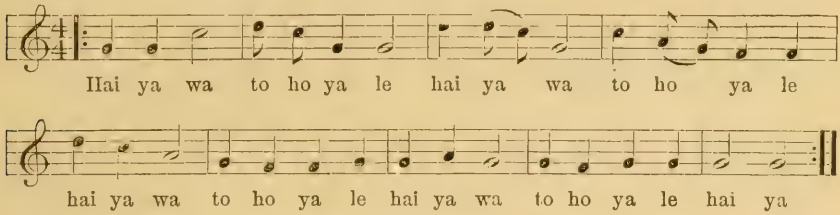
All lock arms and form a ring; all sing and the ring revolves rapidly. No one remains in the ring.

2. *Shatene hitkla* (Tick dance)

The dancers lock arms and form in straight lines (pl. 21). First they move forward two or three steps, then backward, but they gradually advance. When they

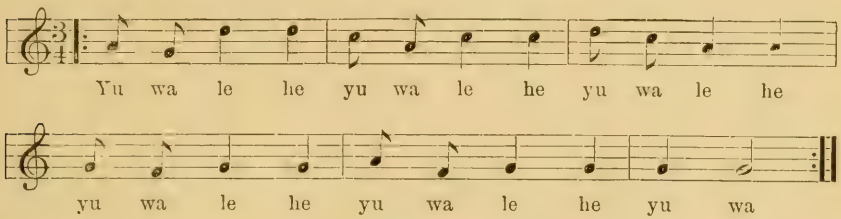
[a] See Stewart Culin, Games of the North American Indians, in *Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, 709, 1907.

take the forward step they stamp with the right foot, as if crushing ticks on the ground, at the same time looking down, supposedly at the doomed insects. During the dance all sing with many repetitions the song here given, the words of which have no special meaning.



3. *Kwîshco hitkla* (Drunken-man dance)

Two lines facing each other are formed by the dancers, who lock arms. The lines slowly approach, then move backward, and then again approach. All endeavor to keep step, and during the dance all sing. The song, which is repeated many times, is evidently a favorite with the Choctaw at Bayou Lacomb.



4. *Tinsanale hitkla*

In this dance two persons, facing, clasp each other's hands. Many couples in this position form a ring. One man remains in the center to keep time for the singing and the circle of dancers revolves around him. The Indians say many persons are required in order to perform this dance properly.

5. *Fuchuse hitkla* (Duck dance)

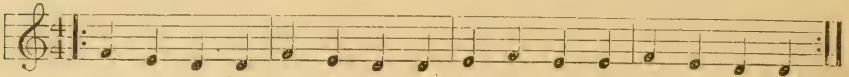
Partners are required in this dance also; they form two lines, facing. The peculiar feature is that two partners pass under the arms of another couple, as shown in plate 21. The dancers endeavor to imitate the motion of a duck in walking, hence the name of the dance.

6. *Hitkla Falama* (Dance Go-and-come)

All lock arms and the line moves sideways, first in one direction, then in the opposite, but never backward or forward. If there are too many dancers for a single line, additional lines are formed. All taking part sing the particular song for this dance.

7. *Siente hitkla* (Snake dance)

Of the seven dances this appears to have been the great favorite as it was also the last. The dancers form in a single line, either grasping hands or each holding on to the shoulder of the dancer immediately in front. First come the men, then the women, and lastly the boys and girls, if any are to dance. The first man in the line is naturally the leader; he moves along in a serpentine course, all following. Gradually he leads the dancers around and around until finally the line becomes coiled, in form resembling

a snake. Soon the coil becomes so close it is impossible to move farther; thereupon the participants release their hold on one another and cease dancing. As will be seen, the song belonging to this dance is very simple, but it is repeated many, many times, being sung during the entire time consumed by the dance, said to be an hour or more. This dance is shown in plate 22. The snake dance closed the ceremony.

The Bayou Lacomb Choctaw always danced at night, never during daylight hours, the snake dance, the last of the seven, ending at dawn. This agrees with the statement made by Bossu just one and a half centuries ago that "nearly all the gatherings of the Chactas take place at night."[a]

Neither the men nor the women of this branch of the tribe appear to know of any special dances, although it is highly probable that in former years distinct ceremonies were enacted on particular occasions.

Until a few years ago there were several hundred Choctaw living in the vicinity of Bayou Lacomb within a radius of a few miles. Their dance ground was in the pine woods a short distance north of the place where the few remaining members of the tribe now dwell. There they would gather and with many fires blazing would dance throughout the night. No whites ever were permitted to witness the dance. It is said that if the Indians suspected a white man was watching them they would extinguish the fires at once and remain in darkness. During the dances one man acted as leader. He held two short sticks, hitting one on the other to keep time for the singing, as shown in plate 21.

The only musical instrument known to the Choctaw of Bayou Lacomb is the drum (*the'ba*), a good example of which is represented in plate 7. This is 30 inches in height and 15 inches in diameter. It is made of a section of a black gum tree; the cylinder wall is less than 2 inches in thickness. The head consists of a piece of untanned goat skin. The skin is stretched over the open end, while wet and pliable, and is passed around a hoop made of hickory about half an inch thick. A similar hoop is placed above the first. To the second hoop are attached four narrow strips of rawhide, each of which is fastened to a peg passing diagonally through the wall of the drum. To tighten the head of the drum it is necessary merely to drive the peg farther in. In this respect, as well as in general form, the drum resembles a specimen from Virginia in the British Museum,[b] as well as the drum even now used on the west coast of Africa. It is not possible to say whether this instrument is a purely American form or whether it shows the influence of the negro.

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[a] Nouveaux voyages aux Indes occidentales, II, 104, Paris, 1768 [written in 1759].

[b] The Sloane Collection in the British Museum, *American Anthropologist*, n. s., VIII, no. 4, 671–685, 1906.

Medicinal Plants and Treatment

The Choctaw make use of a large variety of plants in the treatment of various ailments and exhibit a wide knowledge of the flora of the region. The plants enumerated in the following list[a] were all collected in the vicinity of Bayou Lacomb between January 1 and April 15. It is highly probable that a larger number could be obtained later in the year.

PLANTS

1. *Beshu'kchenokle* (Smilax tamnoides).—The stems are boiled and the extract is taken as a general tonic.

2. *Chilo'pîntobêt* (Erythrina herbacea), spirit beans.—The leaves are boiled in water. The liquid is strained off and again boiled. The extract is taken as a general tonic.

3. *Chînchuba* (Aseyrum crux andreæ), alligator.—The leaves are boiled in water and the liquid is used to bathe sore eyes. The root is boiled and the extract is employed as a remedy for colic.

4. *Klotchowachokama* (Obolaria virginica).—The roots are boiled in water and the liquid is used to bathe cuts, or this decoction is mixed with the scum that rises to the surface when the root of *Liquidambar styraciflua* is boiled in water. This decoction is highly esteemed as a dressing for severe cuts and bruises.

5. *Ête hesha kaklahashe* (Populus angulata), "tree leaf noisy."—The stems, bark, and leaves are boiled together and the steam is allowed to pass over wounds caused by bites of snakes.

6. *Hataks pone nepakwibe* (Chionanthus virginica), old man's beard.—The bark is boiled in water and the extract is used to bathe wounds; or the bark is beaten, and if necessary, a small quantity of water is added, the resultant mixture being used to make poultices or dressings for cuts or severe bruises.

7. *Hekania* (Liquidambar styraciflua).—The roots are boiled in water and the scum is removed and mixed with water in which roots of *Obolaria virignica* have been boiled. The mixture is used as a dressing for cuts and wounds.

8. *Hichi* (Arisaema quinatum).—The root is boiled in water and the extract is taken "to make blood."

9. *Hohshish okwa stikbe ishkwo* (Verbesina virginica), "root water put in drink."—The root is pounded and is then soaked in water a few hours, but is not boiled. The extract is drunk during attacks of fever.

10. *Hungwekilo* (Myrica cerifera).—The leaves and stems are boiled in water and the liquid is drunk during attacks of fever.

11. *Hoshukome* (Rumex verticillatus).—A large quantity of leaves is boiled in water. A person bathes in the liquid four times, once each day for four days in succession, to prevent smallpox.

12. *Hoshukkosona* (Pluchea fœtida), "grass strong smell."—The leaves are boiled in water and the extract is taken during attacks of fever.

13. *Ishuna ignone* (Saururus cernuus), "guts not ripe."—The roots are boiled and mashed and applied as poultices to wounds.

14. *Kafe ashish* (Laurus sassafras).—The roots are boiled in water and the extract is drunk "to thin the blood."

15. *Katlaha* (Magnolia grandiflora).—The bark is boiled in water and the liquid is used to bathe the body to lessen or prevent itching due to prickly heat.

[a] The writer is indebted to Mr. R. S. Cocks, professor of botany in Tulane University, for assistance in the identification of various plants mentioned in this paper.

16. *Napopokpoke* (Gnaphalium polycephalum).—The leaves and blossoms are boiled in water and the extract is taken for colds or for pains in the lungs.

17. *Neta pisa* (Yucca aloifolia), "bear see."—The root is boiled in water and then mashed and mixed with grease or tallow; the mixture is used as a salve for various purposes.

18. *Nashoba impisa* (Chrysopsis graminea), "wolf see."—The entire plant is dried and then burnt; the ashes are used as a powder to cure sores in the mouth.

19. *Notêm pisa* (Cephalanthus occidentalis), "teeth see."—The bark is boiled in water and the extract used to bathe sore eyes; also, the bark is chewed to relieve toothache.

20. *Kwonokasha îpsa* (Polygala lutea).—The blossoms are dried and mixed with a small quantity of hot water to make poultices for swellings.

21. *Shinuktelele* (Pycnanthemum albescens).—The leaves are boiled in water and the liquid is drunk very hot, to cause sweating as a relief for severe colds.

22. *Shoklapa* (Callicarpa americana).—The roots and berries are boiled in water and the extract is taken as a remedy for colic.

23. *Taklaha* (Pinus mitis).—The buds are soaked in cold water but are not boiled. The extract is drunk as a remedy for worms.

24. *Tauchima hobok* (Ceanothus var.).—The roots are boiled in water. The extract is taken in small doses for hemorrhage from the lungs.

25. *Tiaôksês shuwa* (Aristolochia serpentaria), "pine smell."—The root is soaked in water, not boiled. The extract is drunk to relieve pains in the stomach.

It is rather curious that although the witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginica*) is plentiful in the region, the Choctaw appear not to have made use of it. Leaves of the hickory (*Juglans squamosa;* Choctaw, *okesok*) are scattered about to drive away fleas.

FORMS OF TREATMENT

The Choctaw treat boils and ulcers with applications of salve made of pine pitch mixed with grease or tallow. This salve is applied also to wounds caused by splinters and thorns. Severe or deep cuts are filled with sugar and bandaged tightly.

Various remedies are employed for snake bites:

(*a*) Smoke from strong tobacco is blown into the wound.

(*b*) The bitten limb is inserted into a hole in the ground dug for the purpose, which is then filled with earth and water. The limb is allowed to remain thus, in thoroughly saturated earth, for several hours.

(*c*) A quantity of the leaves and bark of the Carolina poplar (*Populus angulata*) is boiled in water; the vessel is then covered and the steam is caused to pass over the wound.

The Choctaw believe in sweating as a cure for certain diseases, but have no recollection of ever having seen a primitive sweat house. They merely wrap themselves in several blankets and drink a quantity of hot liquid.

These Indians seem to be very susceptible to cold and to changes of temperature.

As a remedy for severe pains in the stomach or rheumatic pains these Choctaw believe in the efficacy of a strong counter irritant. Their treatment consists in pressing into the flesh above the seat of

the pain a piece of cotton or similar substance, about the size of a small pea, which is burned in that position. It is said that many of the older Choctaw bore numerous scars as a result of the frequent use of this treatment.

For broken bones in the arms or legs splints and bandages are employed, the injured member remaining wrapped until the bone unites.

Crimes and Punishments

Until a very few years ago no Choctaw could be brought legally before a court in Louisiana to answer for any crime, even murder, provided such crime was perpetrated against another member of the tribe.

Murder was the one great crime recognized by the Choctaw, and the life of the murderer was invariably claimed by the friends or relatives of the victim. It is said that murderers seldom attempted to escape, holding it a duty to their families to receive the punishment of death. To attempt to escape was regarded as a cowardly act, which reflected on every member of the family. If, however, a murderer did succeed in escaping, another member of the family usually was required to die in his stead.

The following account of a native execution, the last to occur according to tribal custom, was related by the two women at Bayou Lacomb. This event occurred some thirty years ago at a place not far from Abita Springs:

One night two men who were really friends, not enemies, were dancing and drinking with many others, when they suddenly began quarreling and fighting; finally one was killed by the other. The following day, after the murderer had recovered from the effects of the whisky, he realized what he had done, and knowing he would have to die, he went to the relatives of the murdered man and told them he was ready to meet his doom, but asked that he be allowed to remain with them about two weeks longer, as he did not want to miss a dance to be held within that time. To this they consented, and during the following days he was given many small presents, as pieces of ribbon, beads, and tobacco. He was treated by everyone, by old and young alike, with the greatest respect and kindness; all endeavored to make his last days enjoyable. At last came the event on account of which his life had been prolonged, and for three days and nights all sang and danced. The next day, just at noon, when the sun was directly overhead, was the time fixed for the execution. Shortly before that time his friends and relatives gathered at his house, where he joined them. All then proceeded to the cemetery, for the execution was to take place on the edge of the grave that he himself had helped to dig, in a spot he had selected. The murderer stood erect at one end of the grave, and with his own hands parted his shirt over his heart. Four of his male friends stood near with their hands on his shoulders and legs, to keep his body erect after death. His female relatives were on each side, and all were singing loudly. Soon he announced that he was ready. A relative of the murdered man advanced and pressing the muzzle of a rifle against the murderer's chest, fired.

As provided for, the body was held in an upright position and immediately a piece of cloth was inserted into the wound to stop the flow of blood. Late that afternoon the remains were placed in the grave, which was filled with earth without ceremony.

Thieves apprehended with the stolen property in their possession were forced to return it. If they could not produce the property, either they or their families were compelled to return goods of equal value.

The Choctaw bear a good reputation among the people of the surrounding country for honesty and truthfulness. They regard lying as a crime and they have no respect for a person whom they can not believe. Bossu, writing in 1759, said of the Choctaw:

> Although they are wild and ferocious, you must gain their confidence, and be very careful to keep your word after having promised them anything, otherwise they treat you with the greatest contempt.

The Choctaw appear to be quiet and peaceable people, and even now the few remaining at Bayou Lacomb often refer to the fact that their tribe never took up arms against the Americans.

Marriage Ceremony

The marriage ceremony as performed until a few years ago, at a time when there were many Choctaw living in the region, was thus described by the women at Bayou Lacomb.

When a man decided he wanted to marry a certain girl he confided in his mother, or if she was not living, in his nearest female relative. It was then necessary for her to talk with the mother or the nearest living relative of the girl, and if the two women agreed, they in turn visited the chiefs or heads of the two *ogla*, or families, to get their consent to the union. As a man was not allowed to marry a girl who belonged to his *ogla*, often the women were obliged to make a long journey before seeing the two chiefs, whose villages were frequently a considerable distance apart.

After all necessary arrangements had been made, a day was fixed for the ceremony. Many of the man's friends and relatives accompanied him to the girl's village, where they seem to have had what may be termed "headquarters" of their own. As the time for the ceremony drew near, the woman with her friends was seen some distance away. The man and his party approached and he endeavored to catch the girl. Then ensued much sham fighting and wrestling between the two parties, and the girl ran about apparently endeavoring to escape, but she was finally caught by the man and his relatives and friends.

Then all proceeded to the place where the feast had been prepared, to which both parties had contributed. Off to one side, four seats had been arranged in a row; usually a log covered with skins served the purpose. The man and girl then took the middle seats and on the ends sat the two male heads or chiefs of their respective *ogla*. Certain questions were then asked by the chiefs, and if all answers were satisfactory, the man and girl agreed to live together as man and wife and

were permitted to do so. This closed the ceremony and then the feasting and dancing began.

The man continued to live in his wife's village and their children belonged to her *ogla*.

By mutual agreement the two parties could separate and, in the event of so doing, were at liberty to marry again. The man usually returned to his own village, taking all his property with him.

If a man died in his wife's village, even though he left children, his brothers or other members of his *ogla* immediately took possession of all his property and carried it back to his native village. His children, being looked on as members of another *ogla*, since they belonged to their mother's family, were not considered as entitled to any of this property.

Death and Burial

There appears to have been very little lamenting or mourning on the occasion of a death or a burial. The body was borne to the grave and the interment took place without a ceremony of any sort. In the event of the death of a man of great importance, however, the body was allowed to remain in state for a day before burial. During that time it was decorated with various ornaments and garments, but these were removed before interment. Such objects are said to have been preserved and handed down from one generation to the next, and used whenever required.

Usually a hunter's gun was placed in the grave with the body.

Mourning

The period of mourning varied with the age of the deceased. For a child or young person it was about three months, but for an older person, as one's mother or father, from six months to one year.

The women cut their hair and "cried" at certain times near the grave.

When a person desired to cease mourning he stuck into the ground so as to form a triangle three pieces of wood, each several feet in length, about one foot apart. The tops of these sticks were drawn together and tied with a piece of bright-colored cloth or ribbon. This object was placed near the door or entrance of the lodge and indicated to all that the occupant desired to cease mourning.

During the next three days the mourners cried or wailed three times each day—at sunrise, at noon, and at sunset. While wailing they wrapped blankets around their heads and sat or knelt upon the ground. During these three days the friends of the mourners gathered and began dancing and feasting. At the expiration of the time they ceased weeping and joined in the festivities, which continued another day.

Religion

As the Choctaw dealt with in this paper have been under the influence of the Roman Catholic Church for many years, it is not surprising that they have modified some of their primitive beliefs regarding the future state. But even in spite of Christian teaching many of their ancient ideas have persisted.

From 1845 until his death in 1887 Père Adrian Rouquette lived among the Choctaw, the greater part of his time being spent at either Bayou Lacomb or Chinchuba, although the first of his three chapels was near Bonfouca, some eight miles east of Bayou Lacomb. By the Choctaw Père Rouquette was known as Chataima, literally "Choctaw-like," from his fancied resemblance to a Choctaw. His hair, which was dark and straight, was worn long, his eyes were dark and piercing, and the natural swarthiness of his complexion was increased by constant exposure to sun and wind. The two women, Emma and Louisa, now living at Bayou Lacomb, when children were baptized by Père Rouquette, and the former was one of the Choctaw who followed his body through the streets of New Orleans and carried wreaths made by the Sisters at Chinchuba.

It is evident that, before the coming of Père Rouquette, the Choctaw did not agree even among themselves regarding the future state. Some held to the belief that with death all existence ceases. They seem to have had a vague idea of a spirit in the body, but when the spirit died, then man, or rather the body, ceases to move. Others, who are said to have constituted the predominating element in the tribe, had a radically different conception of man's future state. These believed in the existence of two spirits—Aba being "the good spirit above" and Nanapolo "the bad spirit." While they insisted that a spirit abides in every Choctaw, still they were of the opinion that all spirits do not leave the earth after death, as explained by the peculiar belief set forth below.

Persons dying by violent deaths involving loss of blood, even a few drops, do not pass to the home of Aba (heaven), regardless of the character of their earthly lives, or their rank in the tribe. At night spirits are wont to travel along the trails and roads used by living men and thus avoid meeting the bad spirit, Nanapolo, whose wanderings are confined to the dark and unfrequented paths of the forest. The spirits of men like the country traversed and occupied by living men, and that is why *Shilup*, the ghost, is often seen moving among the trees or following persons after sunset.

The spirits of all persons not meeting violent deaths, with the exception of those only who murder or attempt to murder their fellow Choctaw, go to the home of Aba. There it is always spring, with sunshine and flowers; there are birds and fruit and game in abundance. There the Choctaw ever sing and dance, and trouble is not

known. All who enter this paradise become equally virtuous without regard to their state while on earth.

The unhappy spirits who fail to reach the home of Aba remain on earth in the vicinity of the places where they have died. But Nanapolo, the bad spirit, is never able to gain possession of the spirit of a Choctaw.

Dreams

The Choctaw hold that it is possible for the "spirit" to leave the body even during life, and by that belief explain dreams thus:

At night when a person is resting and all is quiet the "spirit" steals away from the body and wanders about the country, seeing many people and things, which are known to the individual when he awakes. If, during its wanderings, the spirit meets large animals of any sort, the person will surely suffer misfortune before many days have passed.

Witchcraft

Witchcraft (*holkkunda*) was practised by many persons, both men and women. It was never definitely known whether a person possessed the power to bewitch or when one was making use of it. Old people of both sexes, however, were most often suspected of possessing this power. The manner of exerting this evil influence against others was believed to be after this fashion: Those having proper knowledge could remove at night their viscera, thus reducing their weight to so great an extent that they could fly through the air to the individual they wished to harm. Accompanying them always were several spirits, otherwise resembling men, but no larger than a man's thumb. On reaching the person against whom the spell was to be directed the witch would stop and point toward him, whereupon one of the little spirits would go noiselessly and touch him, afterward remaining and doing a great deal of mischief about the place. The spirit was able to pass with ease through cracks, and thus to reach places not accessible to a larger being. After directing the little spirit, which was left to continue its work, the wizard would fly back to his village or house and again assume his natural condition. Such is the belief of the Choctaw even at the present day.

It is said by these Indians that no herbs were ever added to the food of individuals to cause illness or misfortune. They do not appear to have followed practices similar to those involved in the voodooism of the negroes of Louisiana.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS

All the myths and legends recorded on the following pages[a] are evidently of purely native conception, showing no trace of European influence. According to their own statements the greater part

[a] Related to the writer by two women, Pisatuntema (Emma) and Heleema (Louisa), and a man John, at Bayou Lacomb.

of the folklore of the Choctaw is preserved in the form of songs, of which they have (so they say) a great many, adapted to various occasions.

Creation Myth [a]

Many generations ago Aba, the good spirit above, created many men, all Choctaw, who spoke the language of the Choctaw, and understood one another. These came from the bosom of the earth, being formed of yellow clay, and no men had ever lived before them. One day all came together and, looking upward, wondered what the clouds and the blue expanse above might be. They continued to wonder and talk among themselves and at last determined to endeavor to reach the sky. So they brought many rocks and began building a mound that was to have touched the heavens. That night, however, the wind blew strong from above and the rocks fell from the mound. The second morning they again began work on the mound, but as the men slept that night the rocks were again scattered by the winds. Once more, on the third morning, the builders set to their task. But once more, as the men lay near the mound that night, wrapped in slumber, the winds came with so great force that the rocks were hurled down on them.

The men were not killed, but when daylight came and they made their way from beneath the rocks and began to speak to one another, all were astounded as well as alarmed—they spoke various languages and could not understand one another. Some continued thenceforward to speak the original tongue, the language of the Choctaw, and from these sprung the Choctaw tribe. The others, who could not understand this language, began to fight among themselves. Finally they separated. The Choctaw remained the original people; the others scattered, some going north, some east, and others west, and formed various tribes. This explains why there are so many tribes throughout the country at the present time.

Kwanoka'sha [b]

Kwanoka'sha is the name of a little spirit—a man, but no larger than a child two or three years of age. His home is in a cave under large rocks, in a rough, broken part of the country.

Now, when a child is two or three or even four years old, it is often sick, and then runs away from its home and goes among the trees. When the little one is well out of sight of home Kwanoka'sha, who is on the watch, seizes it and leads it away to his dwelling place. In many instances they have to travel a considerable distance through the country. When Kwanoka'sha and the child enter the spirit's home they are met by three other spirits, all very old, with white hair. Approaching the child the first offers it a knife; the second a bunch of herbs, all poisonous; the third a bunch of herbs yielding good medicine. Now, if the child accepts the knife he is certain to become a bad man, and may even kill his friends. If he takes the bunch of poisonous herbs he will never be able to cure or otherwise help others; but if he waits and accepts the good herbs, then he is destined to become a great doctor and an important and influential man of his tribe, and to have the confidence of all his people. In this event Kwanoka'sha and the three old spirits tell him how to make use of the herbs—the secrets of making medicines of the roots and leaves and of curing and treating various fevers and pains.

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[a] Version related by Pisatuntema (Emma) at Bayou Lacomb, April 15, 1909.

[b] This legend, as related to the writer by Ahojcobe (Emil John), is given by the Choctaw as explaining why some men do good and help others, while many are ignorant and harm those whom they should assist. The existence of a "spirit" such as Kwanoka'sha was evidently believed firmly by all, as it is by the few now living at Bayou Lacomb.

The child remains with the spirits three days, after which he returns to his home, but does not tell where he has been or what he has seen and heard. Not until the child has become a man will he make use of the knowledge gained from the spirits; but never will he reveal to others how it was acquired.

The Choctaw say that few children wait to accept the offering of the good herbs from the third spirit, and hence there are comparatively few great doctors and other men of influence among them.

Kashehotapalo[a]

Kashehotapalo is neither man nor beast. His head is small and his face shriveled and evil to look upon; his body is that of a man. His legs and feet are those of a deer, the former being covered with hair and the latter having cloven hoofs. He lives in low, swampy places, away from the habitations of men. When hunters go near his abiding place, he quietly slips up behind them and calls loudly, then turns and runs swiftly away. He never attempts to harm the hunters, but delights in frightening them. The sound uttered by Kashehotapalo resembles the cry of a woman, and that is the reason for his name (*kasheho*, "woman;" *tapalo*, "call").

Okwa Naholo

The *Okwa naholo* ("White People of the Water") dwell in deep pools in rivers and bayous. There is said to be such a place in the Abita river; the pool is clear and cold and it is easy to see far down into the depths, but the surrounding water of the river is dark and muddy. Many of the Okwa naholo live in this pool, which is known to all the Choctaw.

As their name signifies, the Okwa naholo resemble white people more than they do Choctaw; their skin is rather light in color, resembling the skin of a trout.

When the Choctaw swim in the Abita near the pool, the Okwa naholo attempt to seize them and to draw them down into the pool to their home,[b] where they live and become Okwa naholo. After the third day their skin begins to change and soon resembles the skin of a trout. They learn to live, eat, and swim in the same way as fish.

Whenever the friends of a person who has become one of the Okwa naholo gather on the river bank near the pool and sing, he often rises to the surface and talks with them, sometimes even joining in the singing. But after living in the pool three days the newly made Okwa naholo can not leave it for any length of time; if they should go out of the water they would die after the manner of fish, for they can not live in the air.

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[a] This myth was told by Ahojeobe at Bayou Lacomb in March, 1909, and he assured the writer that only a few days before one of the boys, while hunting in a swamp not far from the bayou, had been frightened by Kashehotapalo, whom he saw distinctly, and that he immediately ran home and related his experience.

The great similarity between the subject of this myth and the Faun of Latin mythology at first glance would lead one to suspect that the conception had been acquired by the Choctaw after their contact with Europeans. But such does not appear to have been its origin with the tribe. So firmly convinced are they that such a "spirit" exists that it is probable the tradition has been handed down through many generations.

[b] Heleema (Louisa), one of the women living at Bayou Lacomb, claims that when a child, some forty years ago, she had an experience with the Okwa naholo. She related it with the greatest sincerity. One summer day, when she was seven or eight years of age, she was swimming in the Abita with many other Choctaw children. She was a short distance away from the others when suddenly she felt the Okwa naholo drawing her down. The water seemed to rise about her and she was struggling and endeavoring to free herself when some of her friends, realizing her danger and the cause of it, went to her assistance and, seizing her by the hair, drew her to the shore. Never again did the children go swimming near the pool where this incident occurred.

Why 'Possum has a Large Mouth

It had been a dry season and there was very little food for Deer, consequently he had become thin and rather weak. One day Deer met 'Possum and exclaimed: "Why! 'Possum, how very fat you are. How do you keep so fat when I can not find enough to eat?" And 'Possum answered, "I live on persimmons, and as they are unusually large this year, I have all I want to eat." "But how do you get persimmons, which grow so high above the ground?" "That is very easily done," replied 'Possum. "I go to the top of a high hill and, running swiftly down, strike a persimmon tree so hard with my head that all the ripe persimmons fall to the ground. Then I sit there and eat and eat until I can not hold more." "Indeed, that is easily done," answered Deer; "now watch me."

So 'Possum waited near the tree while Deer went to the top of a near-by hill. And when Deer reached the top of the hill, he turned and then ran quickly down, striking the tree with so great force that he was killed and all his bones were broken.

When 'Possum saw what Deer had done, he laughed so hard that he stretched his mouth, which remains large even to this day.

The Hunter who Became a Deer

One night a hunter killed a doe and soon afterward fell asleep near the carcass. The next morning, just at sunrise, the hunter was surprised and startled to see the doe raise her head and to hear her speak, asking him to go with her to her home. At first he was so surprised that he did not know what to reply, so the doe again asked him whether he would go. Then the hunter said that he would go with her, although he had no idea where she would lead him. So they started and the doe led the hunter through forests and over high mountains, until at last they reached a large hole under a rock, which they entered. Here the hunter was led before the King of all the deer, an immense buck, with huge antlers and a large black spot on his back. Soon the hunter became drowsy and finally he fell asleep. Now all around the cave were piles of deer's feet, antlers, and skins. While the hunter was asleep the deer endeavored to fit to his hands and feet deer's feet which they selected for the purpose. After several unsuccessful attempts the fourth set proved to be just the right size and were fastened firmly on the hunter's hands and feet. Then a skin was found that covered him properly, and finally antlers were fitted to his head. And then the hunter became a deer and walked on four feet after the manner of deer.

Many days passed, and the hunter's mother and all his friends thought he had been killed. One day when they were in the forest they found his bow and arrows hanging on a branch of the tree beneath which he had slept beside the body of the doe. All gathered around the spot and began singing, when suddenly they saw a herd of deer bounding toward them through the forest. The deer then circled about the singers. One large buck approached closer than the others, and the singers, rushing forward, caught it. To the great astonishment of all it spoke, whereupon they recognized the voice of the lost hunter. Greatly distressed, the hunter's mother begged her companions to remove from her son the deer skin and antlers and feet, but they told her he would certainly die if they should do so. She insisted, however, saying she would rather bury her son than to have him remain a deer. So her friends began tearing away the skin, which already had grown to the hunter's body, and, as they continued their efforts to remove it, the blood began to flow. Finally the hunter died. Then his body was taken back to the village and was buried with the ceremony of a great dance.

The Hunter and the Alligator

One winter there were many hunters living in a village, all of whom, with one exception, had killed a great many deer. But one had met with very poor luck, and although he often succeeded in getting close to deer, just ready to draw his bow on them, they

always contrived to escape unharmed. He had been away from his village three days, and during that time had seen many deer, but had not been able to kill a single one. On the third day, when the sun was overhead, the hunter saw a huge alligator resting on a dry, sandy spot.

This alligator had been without water for many days, and was dry and shriveled and so weak that he could scarcely speak. He was able, however, to ask the hunter where water could be had. The hunter replied, "In that forest, only a short journey hence, is a clear, deep pool of cold water." "But I can not travel alone; I am too weak to go so far. Come nearer that we may talk and plan. I can not harm you; have no fear," said the alligator.

At last the hunter went nearer and listened to the alligator, who said: "I know you are a hunter, but all the deer escape from you. Now, carry me to the water and I will then make you a great hunter and tell you how to kill many, many deer." The hunter hesitated, as he feared the alligator, and then he said: "I will carry you, but not unless I may bind your legs so you can not scratch, and your mouth so you can not bite me." The alligator rolled over on his back and held up his legs, saying, "I am helpless; bind me and do with me as you will."

Then the hunter bound with a cord the alligator's legs and mouth. Then he lifted the animal to his shoulder and carried him to the water. When they reached the pool the hunter loosened the cords and the alligator plunged into the water. It went down, then returned to the surface three times, then went down again and remained a long time. At last he rose again to the surface and spoke to the hunter, saying: "You brought me to the water; now listen, and if you do as I counsel you will become a great hunter. Take your bow and arrows and go into the woods. You will first meet a small doe, but do not kill it. Next you will meet a large doe, but you must not shoot this one, either. Then you will see a small buck, but this likewise must be spared. Lastly you will encounter a very large, old buck. Go very close to it and kill it, and ever afterward you will be able to kill many deer."

The hunter did as the alligator told him, and never again was without venison in his camp.

Hoklonote'she

A man away from his village on a hunting trip had killed many deer and bears. One night he made a large fire of oak and soon was sleeping soundly, but before long he was aroused by the cry of an owl, and, looking up, he saw a huge owl standing over the fire. Then the hunter thought to himself, "What am I to do?" Thereupon the owl said to him, "So you wonder what you are to do," and repeated every thought the hunter had.

The owl was really Hoklonote'she, a bad spirit that can read men's thoughts,and readily assumes the forms of various birds and animals.

After the owl had stood there some time, repeating whatever thoughts were in the hunter's mind, the latter suddenly jumped up and vigorously stirred the fire, causing the oak logs to send up a myriad of sparks that fell on the feathers of the owl and burned them. So badly frightened was Hoklonote'she that he flew away in haste, and never again troubled the hunter.

The Girl and the Devil

A young Choctaw girl was walking alone one day in the outskirts of the village when she suddenly met a young man whom she had never seen before. Soon he spoke to the girl and asked her to accompany him to his home. At first she refused, but at last he succeeded in persuading her to go with him. They passed through dense woods and over hills, and at last entered the yard that surrounded his house. Here various birds and animals were tied to the trees. As they were hungry, food was brought them, and then, and not until then, did the man assume his true character, and the girl saw the Devil before her. Then she became frightened and

endeavored to escape, but before she could do so she was seized and locked in a small cave.

A large frog hopped from a hole in the far corner of the cave, and going to the girl, said: "Do you know what that noise is?" "No," replied the girl, "what is it?" The frog told her the Devil and his men were sharpening their knives to kill her. At this she became more frightened than before, but the frog quieted her by saying: "Now, if you will listen and do just as I say you will escape. I will open this door and thereupon you must run swiftly out and down the wide road. Soon you will reach a road on the left, but do not take it; keep to the broad road. Then you will come to the junction of three roads, and you must take the middle one. Shortly afterward you will reach a broad bayou where there will be a small boat on the shore. Here you will be safe."

After saying this to the girl the frog hopped up a beam to the top of the door, which he unlocked. As soon as the door swung open the girl ran out and followed the roads as she had been directed. Finally she arrived at the bayou, jumped into the small boat, and, seizing the paddle, pushed out from the shore. As she neared the middle of the bayou she heard voices calling her, and looking in the direction of the sound she saw the Devil standing on the bank just where she had been a few moments before. He called the girl, who was not able to resist him, so she pushed the boat toward the spot where he stood. "Come nearer," said the Devil, "so that I can step into your boat." The girl said she could not do so, but she rested one end of her paddle on the side of the boat and the other end on the shore, telling the Devil to walk on the bridge thus made. He started to do so, but just as he reached the middle the girl jerked the paddle and the Devil fell into the water. He sank straight to the bottom of the bayou and never came up.

In time the Devil's body broke into many small pieces, which became hard, forming the gravel now found on the bottoms of the bayous.

Skate'ne

Late one afternoon several children were playing near their house when suddenly they saw a woman approaching. She was very old and stooping, and her hair was white. The children were greatly frightened and ran into the house, but soon returned to the old woman, who said to them: "Children, do not be afraid of me, for nothing will harm you. I am your great-great-great-grandmother, and neither you nor your mother has ever seen me. Now, go to the house and tell her that I have come." The children did so. Then they took a deer skin and spread it on the ground for the old woman and carried her food and drink. She then asked the children when their father went to sleep and in which part of the house he lay, and the children told her all.

That night, after all had gone to sleep, the old woman entered the house and cut off the man's head, which she put into a basket she carried for that purpose; then she covered the man's body with his blanket and quietly left the house. The next morning the man's wife was surprised to find him asleep (as she supposed), since it was his custom to go hunting before sunrise. So she spoke to him, and as he did not answer she pulled off his blanket. When she saw that his head was missing she became greatly alarmed.

After cutting off the man's head Skate'ne, the old woman, immediately left the house and started down the road. Soon she met a large bear, who said to her, "What have you covered up in your basket, old woman?" "You must not see it," said she, "for if you look on it you will lose your eyes; it is poison and bad." The bear was contented and went on his way.

Then she met many other animals, and at last came two wildcats. "Stop, old woman, and show us what you have in your basket," called one of the wildcats, "we must see what you carry." The old woman repeated what she had told the bear and

all the others. "But we must look inside your basket, even if we do lose our eyes," replied one of the wildcats, at the same time seizing the basket and raising the cover. When they saw the man's head they knew it was the old woman who prowled around during the night, killing men and animals and birds, so they determined to kill her. While one held her the other went to find a large club. When he had gone she said to the wildcat holding her: "Over there is a large club. You would do well to get it and kill me before your companion returns, for the one that kills me will always have good luck, and I like you." So the remaining wildcat went to get the club, for he believed what the old woman had told him, and hence wanted to kill her. On his return with the club he could not find the old woman, for she was Skate'ne, an owl, and had flown away.

Tashka and Walo

Tashka and Walo were brothers who lived long ago. Every morning they saw the sun rise above the horizon, pass high overhead, and late in the day die in the west.

When the boys were about four years old they conceived the idea of following the sun and seeing where he died. So the next day, when he was overhead, they started to follow him; but that night, when he died, they were still in their own country, where they knew the hills and the rivers. Then they slept, and in the morning when the sun was again overhead they once more set off to follow him. And thus they continued for many years to wend their way after the sun in his course through the heavens.

Long, long afterward, when the two boys had become men, they reached a great expanse of water, and the only land they could see was the shore on which they were standing. Late that day, when Sun died, they saw him sink into the water; then they also passed over the water and entered Sun's home with him. All about them they saw women—the stars are women and the moon is Sun's wife. Then Moon asked the brothers how they had found their way so far from their home. They told her how for many, many years, ever since they were mere boys, they had followed Sun in his daily journey.

Then Sun told his wife to boil water. Into this he put the boys and rubbed them; this treatment caused them to turn red and their skin to come off.

Sun then asked them whether they knew the way to return to their home, and they said, "No;" so he took them to the edge, whence they looked down to the earth but they could not distinguish their home.

Sun asked why they had followed him, as it was not time for them to reach heaven. They replied that their only reason for following him was a desire to see where he died.

Sun then told them that he would send them home, but that for four days after reaching their home they must not speak a word to any person. If they spoke during the four days they would die, otherwise they would then live and prosper. A large buzzard was then called by Sun and the two boys were placed on its back. Buzzard then started toward the earth. The clouds are midway between heaven and earth; above the clouds wind never blows. As buzzard flew from heaven to the clouds the brothers could easily keep their hold; but from the clouds to the earth the buzzard was blown in all directions. All reached the earth in safety, however, and the boys recognized the trees that stood about their old home.

They rested beneath the trees, and while there an old man passed by who knew the brothers. He continued down the road, and soon meeting the boys' mother, told her the boys had come back. She hastened to see them. When she saw them she began to talk and made them answer her. Then they told her that, as they had spoken during the first four days after their return, they would surely die. Knowing she had forced them to speak, on hearing this the mother was greatly worried. Then all went to the mother's home, and the brothers told of all they had seen and how they had followed Sun during many years. After they had told all, they died and went up to heaven to remain forever.

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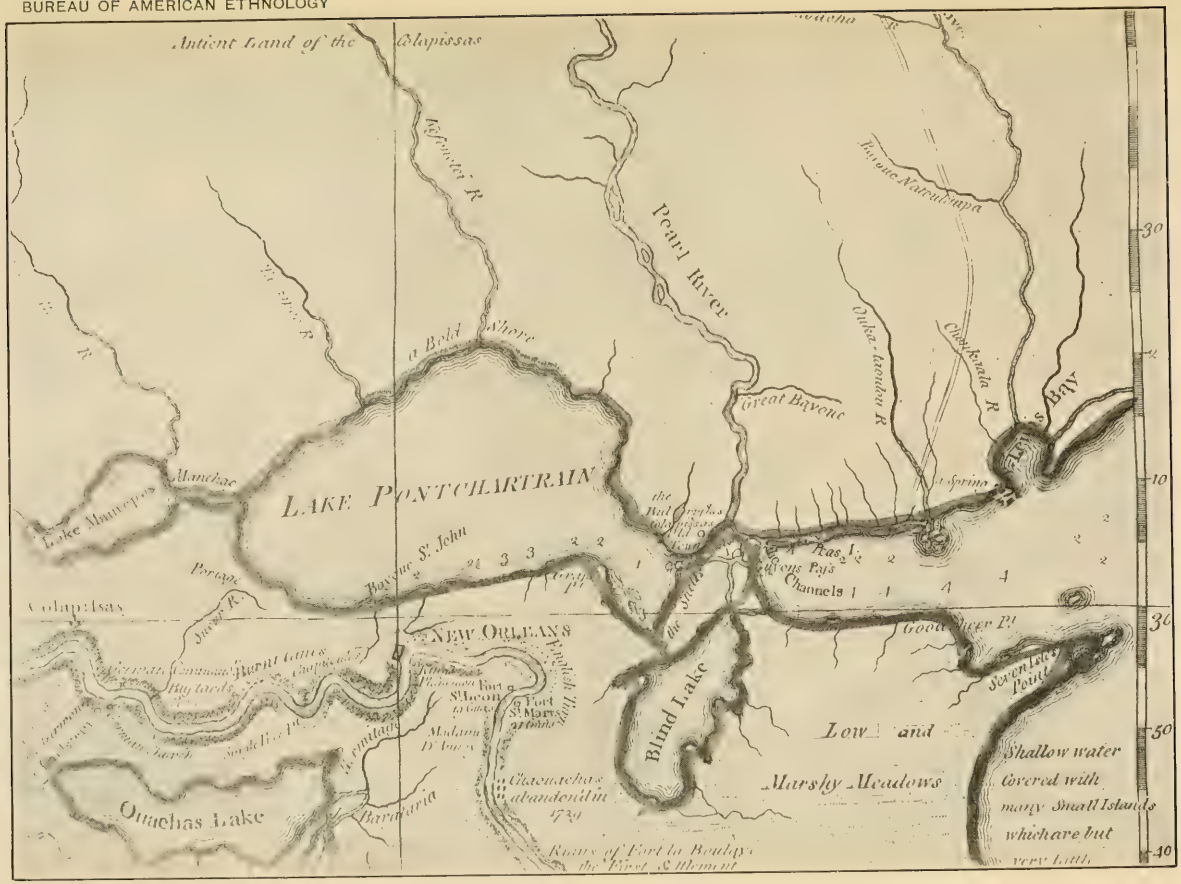
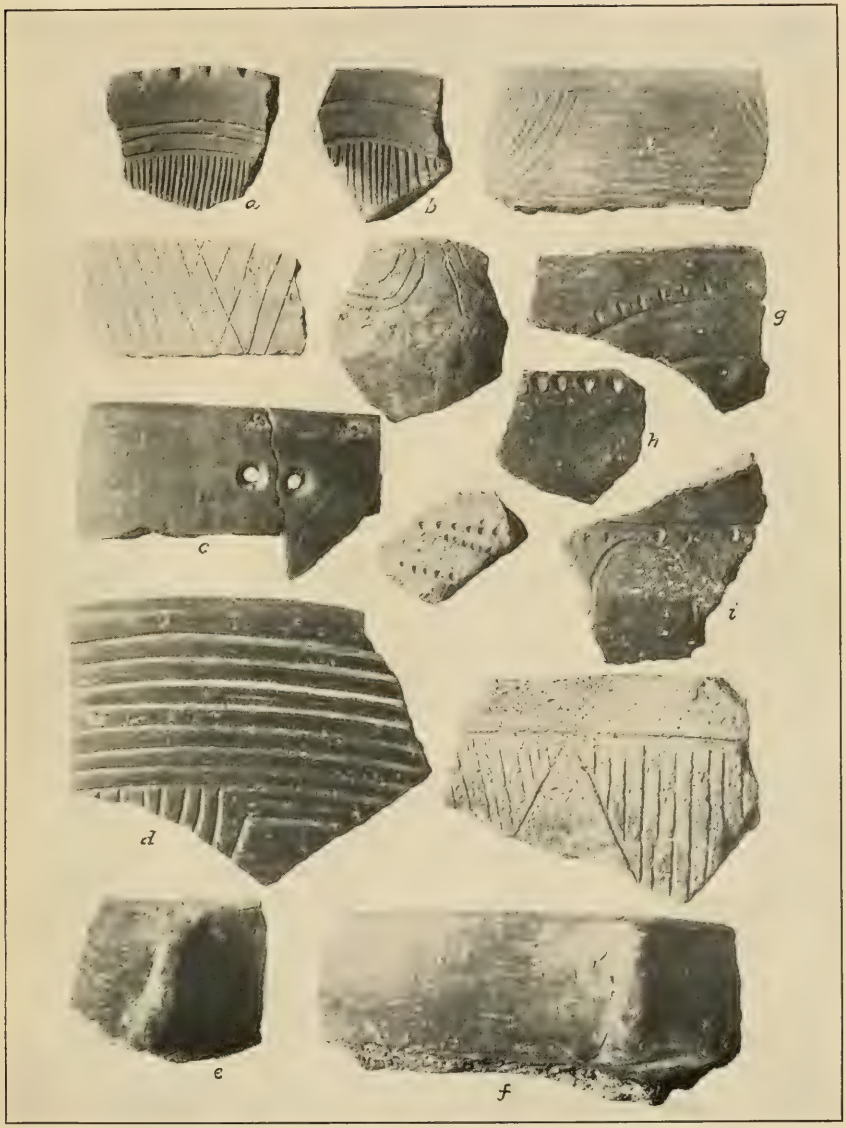
LONGLEAF PINE, ST. TAMMANY PARISH



SECTION OF THE ROSS MAP, 1765

NORTH END OF MOUND NEAR CHINCHUBA CREEK

PALMETTO THATCH HOUSE NEAR MANDEVILLE



POTTERY FROM SHELL DEPOSIT IN MOUND NEAR CHINCHUBA CREEK

PIPE (*a*) FROM SHELL DEPOSIT AND OBJECTS OF STONE (*b–m*) FOUND ON SURFACE

ARTIFACTS FOUND IN OR NEAR SHELL DEPOSIT

PÈRE ROUQUETTE'S OAK

DRUM MADE BY AHOJEOBE

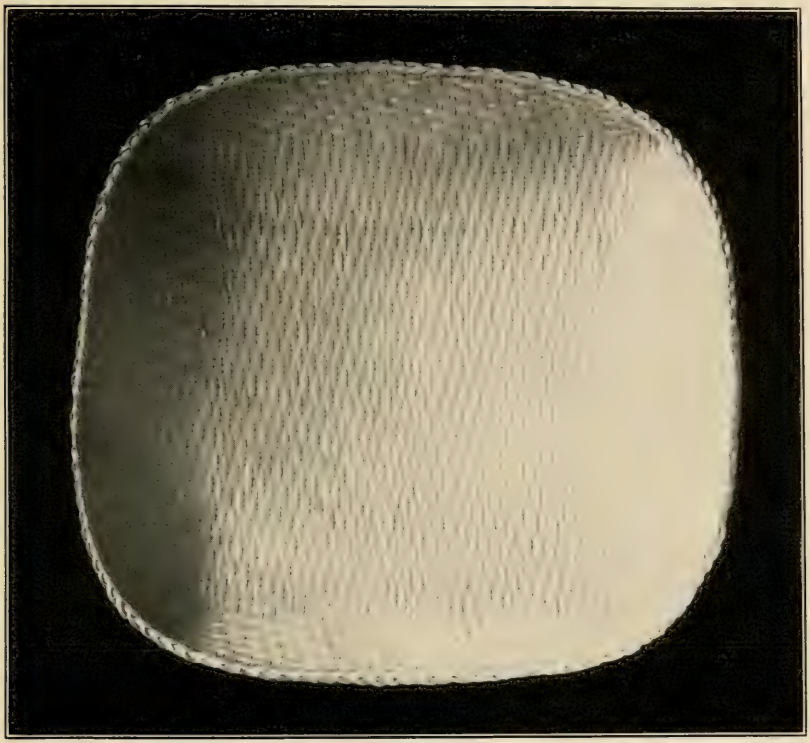
Height, 30 inches

OLD MORTAR MADE OF BLACK GUM

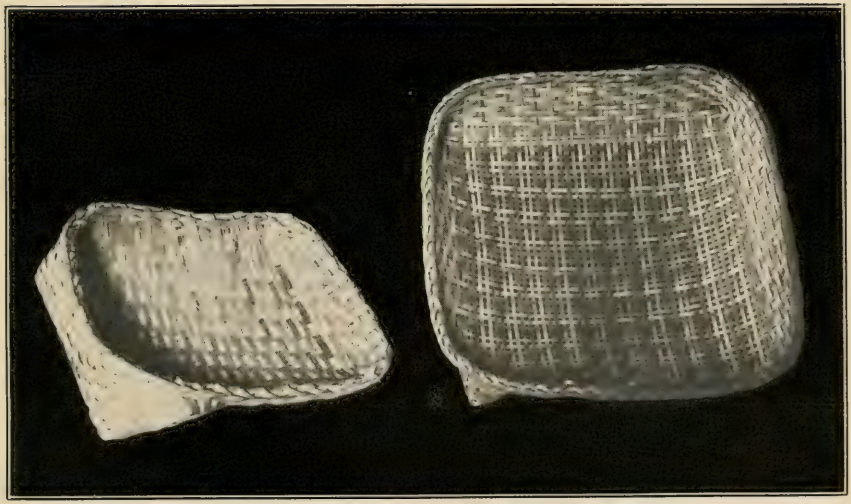
Height, 31 inches

DRUM AND MORTAR

POUNDING CORN IN WOODEN MORTAR



TAPA, OR LARGE FLAT BASKET



OBFKO′, OR WINNOWING BASKET ISHSHO′HA, OR SIEVE

NATIVE BASKETS

ANCIENT METHOD OF WEARING THE HAIR—PHOTOGRAPH OF HELEEMA (LOUISA)

a REMOVING HAIR FROM A SKIN

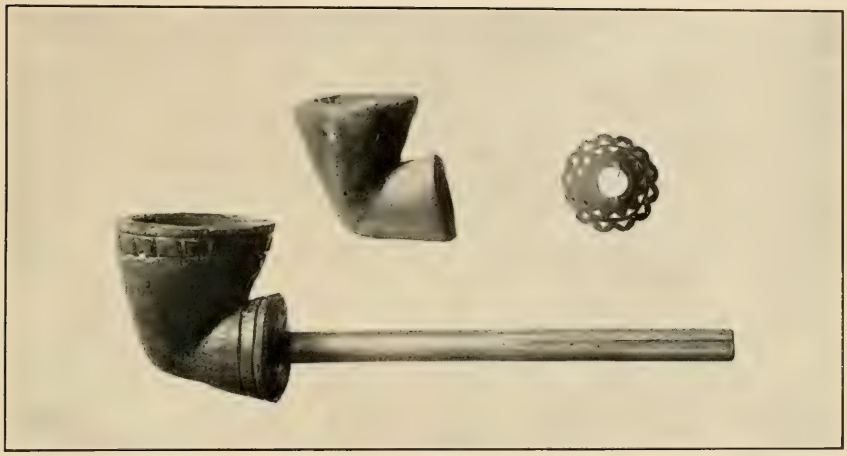
b POUNDING A SKIN

TWO TANNING PROCESSES

a SCRAPING A SKIN

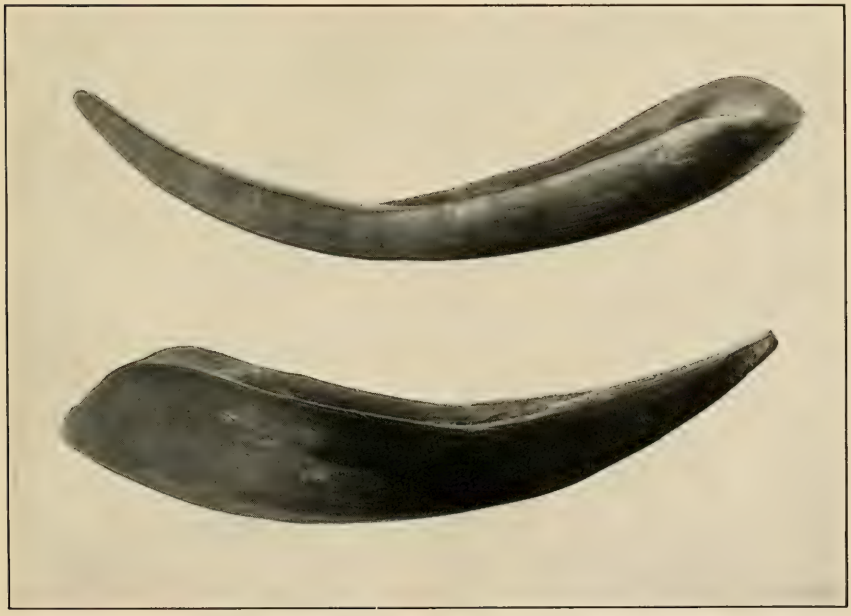
b HABITATION ABOUT 50 YEARS OLD, SHOWING FRAME FOR STRETCHING SKINS (ON LEFT)

AHOJEOBE (EMIL JOHN)



Two-fifths natural size

PIPES MADE BY AHOJEOBE; SMALL SILVER ORNAMENT



About one-half natural size

SPOONS MADE OF COW'S HORN

NATIVE ARTIFACTS

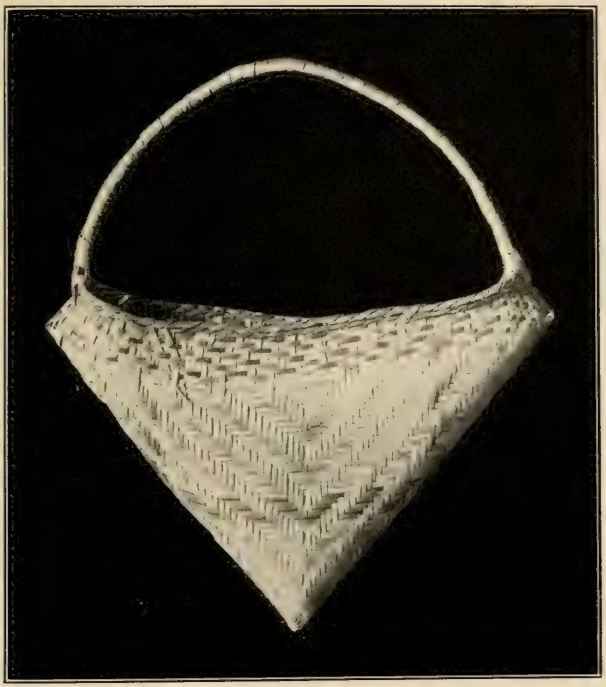
CARRYING-BASKET IN USUAL POSITION

(Same basket is shown in pl. 16)

PACK BASKET

The occupant of the basket is a fullblood Choctaw boy about 2 years old

PISATUNTEMA (EMMA)



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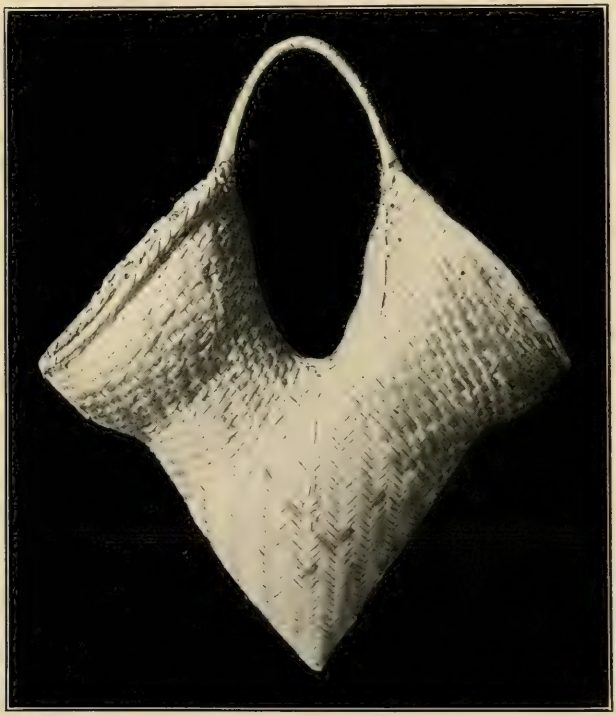
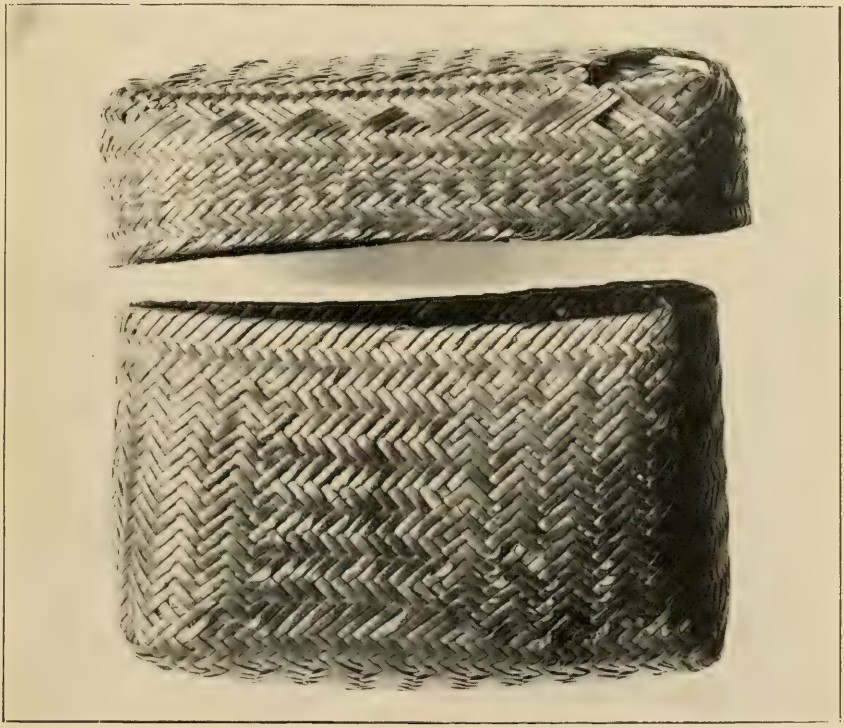


ELBOW-SHAPED

NATIVE BASKETS

a LARGE SPECIMEN



b VERY OLD SPECIMEN

NATIVE BASKETS, DOUBLE WOVEN, WITH COVERS

BLOWGUN IN POSITION FOR SHOOTING

The Choctaw here shown is Toshkachito

TICK DANCE

DUCK DANCE

NATIVE DANCES

READY TO BEGIN

SERPENTINE MOVEMENT

SNAKE DANCE

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